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PLANNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

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CENTRALIZED PLANNING AND COORDINATION ENABLE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO MEET THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. MOST EFFORTS AT CENTRALIZED PLANNING ARE PREDICATED ON TWO CONCEPTS--MANPOWER NEEDS AND PROJECTING CURRENT TRENDS. THE CONCEPT OF MANPOWER NEEDS IS THE MORE LOGICAL, BUT IS ALSO MORE DIFFICULT TO CARRY OUT. PLANNING IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH PREDICTION, AND THERE ARE LIMITATIONS AND FALLACIES IN CURRENT PLANNING METHODS. THREE MAJOR ISSUES IN PLANNING EMERGE--(1) CERTAIN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN PLANNING MAY CONFLICT WITH EACH OTHER, (2) THERE MAY BE A FAILURE TO DISTINGUISH THE TYPES AND LEVELS OF PLANNING NEEDED, AND (3) UNDERSTANDING OF CHANGE AS A PROCESS MAY BE LACKING. FOUR CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING PLANNING PRIORITIES ARE DISCUSSED--(1) POPULATION, (2) IMITATION OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF OTHER STATES, (3) CRITERION OF COMPLEMENTARITY, AND (4) COST OF INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMS AND PRESSURE POLITICS. SEVEN GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL PLANNING ARE PRESENTED--(1) USE OF SPECIALIZED PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS, (2) DIFFERENTIATION OF PLANNING AND ADMINISTERING, (3) CAUTIOUS USE OF POPULATION TRENDS, (4) PROVISION OF AN ADEQUATE PLANNING STAFF WITH A CLEARLY DELINEATED ROLE, (5) DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPECIAL AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING, (6) CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN PLANNING FOR A STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND FOR INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH, AND (7) PLANNING AS A FORM OF LEADERSHIP. THIS DOCUMENT IS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM THE INSTITUTE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, ATHENS, GEORGIA 30601, FOR $0.50 (HW)

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PLANNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

Institutions of higher education have been charged with at least three major responsibilities: (1) the preservation of knowledge and the conservation of cultural heritages, (2) the dissemination of knowledge and the training of productive citizens, and (3) the advancement of knowledge and the enhancement of cultural values. The extent to which a particular institution will direct its efforts to one or all of these responsibilities will depend upon: (a) the traditional identity or role of the institution, (b) the specific responsibilities with which it is charged by its governing board, (c) the particular resources and facilities of the institution, and (d) the specific demands placed upon the institution by the community, state, or region which the institution serves.

In recent years there has been an increasing concern with centralized planning and coordination for institutions of higher learning in individual states or regions.[1] The tendency of colleges and universities to assume unduly competitive roles is perceived by many as not being in the best interests of state or society, and the strength of conforming forces in institutional growth and development is regarded as wasteful of state or regional resources and finances. These trends, coupled with the national dialogue about excellence, imply that institutions of higher education can best serve the state and society in which they are located by defining their role as an agent of society and by directing their major efforts to the functions they can best perform. The underlying assumption of centralizing planning is that all institutions in a state or region cannot serve all functions of higher education equally well, and that there must be a division of labor. Few states are regarded as wealthy enough to support the development of more than one comprehensive university. Indeed, there is considerable distress over the possibility that too many states are unable to support the development of even one.

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1. A. J. Brumbaugh, State-Wide Planning and Coordination of Higher Education. Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1963.

Needless duplication of academic programs or wasteful competition in such states can only result in a dissipation of already limited funds and resources.

The Nature of Educational Planning

Planning in higher education stems from a concept as old as civilization itself, the division of labor. It is in essence, therefore, a process of deciding how the duties and responsibilities of education should be divided and for what purposes. This implies that the magnitude of the task is too great for a single institution, and that institutions charged with the responsibility of educating a state's citizenry should do so within a framework of delegated authority and delineated roles. All of the institutions would not offer the same academic programs or seek to serve the same segment of society but each would have a role which would be, to some extent, differentiated from those of other institutions in the same state.[2]

Most efforts at centralized planning in education are predicated on two basic concepts. The first is a concept of manpower needs while the second is primarily some method of projecting current trends. Both methods have inherent weaknesses which have not always been evident to either those actually involved in educational planning or those responsible for administrative decisions based on planning surveys.

The concept of planning to meet manpower needs is the more logical of the two planning methods but the more difficult to carry out.[3] The method implies that the

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2. For several interesting papers on planning see: Owen A. Knorr (Ed.), Long-Range Planning in Higher Education. Boulder: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1965.

3. For an example of projected manpower needs on the national level see: Meeting Manpower Needs in Science and Technology: Report Number One: Graduate Training in Engineering, Mathematics, and Physical Sciences: A Report of the President's Science Advisory Committee, Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962.

fundamental purpose of educational institutions is to supply the educated manpower needed for social, political, and cultural leadership and for the nation's numerous industrial, commercial, financial, educational, governmental, and social organizations. There is an assumption that in some way the future manpower needs of the subregion, state, region, or nation can be determined, and that educational institutions can, in effect, gear their academic programs to produce the manpower required. Indeed, the strongest argument used in recent years to support education with Federal funds has been the nation's critical shortages in certain types of manpower, such as scientists, engineers, technicians, physicians, and nurses. The argument is presented in terms that critical shortages do exist and that additional personnel will be needed to render the services or to produce the goods that are essential to national security and economic development. The title given to the National Defense Education Act of 1958 is ample indication of the persuasiveness of the argument.

Although persuasive in its effect on legislators, public administrators, and the general public, the concept of planning to meet manpower needs does not simplify the process of actual planning as much as it would first appear.[4] Estimates of future manpower needs are frequently more tenuous than the general public recognizes, and the lag between estimated need and developed academic programs is often too great to accomplish the purposes supposedly avowed. The development of an academic program in higher education is too often an extended, much belabored process of cut-and-try. Too often it will be a decade or more before a new program in higher education can have any significant effect on the actual manpower at work in any particular vineyard. This implies that planning in education must necessarily be long-range in nature.

Because of rapid changes in the nation's manpower needs, it is entirely possible that by the time there is a sufficient supply of manpower, the demand for a particular specialty has either diminished or been met through utilization

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4. For a discussion of the difficulties involved in estimating future manpower needs see: The Long-Range Demand for Scientific and Technical Personnel: A Methodological Study. Washington: National Science Foundation, 1961.

of personnel trained in other specialties. More likely, however, is a continuing race between supply and demand in which supply never catches up with demand because of both increases in total demand and qualitative shifts in the nature of the demand. This is especially true of the professions of medicine and engineering in which we have witnessed such a rapid increase in demand that manpower needs have been increasingly met through a reorganization of services and functions with an increasing reliance upon subprofessional, technical, and ancillary personnel.

Educational planning on the basis of projected trends has met with greater popularity and perhaps greater success than planning on the basis of manpower needs. The primary reason for this would seem to be the relative ease with which certain types of quantified data can be obtained and the procedures by which trends in the data can be detected and extrapolated. Population statistics are especially applicable to an analysis of educational development and provide a variety of variables which can be projected for meaningful information about future educational needs. Analyses of population trends by age, sex, race, geographic distribution, and educational levels give pertinent information about the rising demand for higher education. Each of these variables has been shown to be related to the increasing enrollments in institutions of higher education, and projections of this type are easily made by a variety of mathematical techniques. Also related to the development of higher education are numerous economic conditions and factors such as technological innovations.[5] Their relationships with higher education are not well understood, however, and projections on the basis of economic variables or anticipated technological development are quite tenuous at the present time.

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5. State surveys of this type are too numerous to attempt a listing here. The most recent survey known to the author has been conducted in the State of Virginia. Published reports consist of 12 Staff Reports and the Report of the Higher Education Study Commission to the Governor and the General Assembly of Virginia. Richmond: December, 1965. For a listing of other state surveys see Knorr, op. cit., p. 51.

Projected growth in higher education on the basis of population trends has the advantage of being systematic and acquires thereby the appearance of being scientific. Any type of projection into the future is suspect, however, because a projection represents little more than an expected continuation of events observed in the past. No projection can take into consideration a host of contingency factors, any one of which may alter radically the expectations derived from past experience. Even the most direct methods of projections, such as the projections of upper division enrollment from lower division enrollment are subject to contingencies which cannot be foreseen or adjusted for in each and every case.

The Limitations of Current Planning Methods

The major implication of the preceding discussion is that planning is not synonymous with prediction. Nor must planning rest entirely on predicted events or outcomes. Planning in education must be sensitive to changing conditions in the social, cultural, economic, and technological spheres but educational plans must not be tied to population or economic projections so strongly that the plans collapse when unforeseen contingencies occur. It is well always to remember that education is not solely the result of other forces but is also an agent for helping produce the forces with which education is so closely linked.

A second implication is that educational planning must be, in a sense, continuous. This is to say that projections must be subject to revision but they should not be capricious. Many commitments must be, by their nature, long-range but where flexibility of planning can be maintained, there are numerous advantages in doing so. The gist, then, is that the importance of planning is widely conceded but, unfortunately, this agreement on the desirability of planning does not specify how planning should be conducted. Nor does it indicate the exact nature of planning as it is conducted in most state or regional studies. Other questions unanswered are: who should do the planning that is necessary for the development of higher education, how should planning be related to coordination, and what authority should those charged with the responsibilities of planning have?

Fallacies in Educational Planning

Planning in higher education is subject to several fallacies which have gone largely unnoticed. For example, a fallacy in much planning on the basis of manpower needs is the notion of finite demand. Conceptualization of planning in these terms implies that a determinable number of persons is needed to perform the services and functions of a given occupation. That a specific number cannot be determined or that a specific number is not even desirable are not as widely recognized as one would expect. Though thought of humorously, there is such a phenomenon as Parkinson's law in which the duties and functions of an occupation expand either through the annexation of new duties or through the extension of old ones. This results in a tendency for most occupations at the white collar level to require greater numbers of people, especially if the occupation is one in which the duties and functions themselves are not finite. The production of a specific number of a particular consumer good may require a specific number of production workers to assemble, package, and ship the final product; the rendering of a consumer service, however, will not call for an easily specified number of people because simple repair work may extend into a maintenance service which can be expanded indefinitely. To wash an automobile is to spend a certain amount of time performing a given task. To wax and polish an automobile, however, is to spend as much time as one might desire; when the job is over will depend entirely upon the time that one is willing to spend performing the task.

The major fallacy involved in planning with projected trends is the implicit assumption that planning is essentially an information gathering process and that data once gathered and organized will, to a certain extent, "speak for themselves." This assumption ignores the fact that the data collected in planning surveys do not dictate the conclusions and recommendations which are usually made in "master plans" or commission reports. Indeed, the majority of recommendations made by study commissions do not follow directly from the masses of data collected but are based on factors, conditions, and circumstances--many of which are often exterior to both education and planning methodology.

Issues and Conflicts

In addition to certain fallacies which are involved in much educational planning, there would seem to be a number of issues and conflicts which require some degree of resolution. No one involved in state surveys or serving on state commissions has denied the existence of problems or difficulties encountered in the planning process. There is a need, nonetheless, to clarify some of the issues and to sharpen the conflicts which are often inherent in planning surveys and commission reports.

A primary need in educational planning is a better understanding of planning as a process. Our knowledge of planning as opposed to the making of plans is more limited than the plethora of state study commissions and master plans would indicate. Despite the abundance of commission reports, there is a need to know more about how plans are made, what choices are permissible in planning surveys and how they are made, and how plans are actually to be implemented.

A major issue in many planning surveys is the implicit commitment to certain goals and objectives, some of which may be in actual conflict with each other. Some commission reports and master plans make no reference to values, goals, or commitments but more or less take for granted that expanded educational opportunities is an unquestioned social good. Where goals and objectives in commission reports are articulated, they are frequently so general or so vague that they provide little in the way of guidelines or principles on which recommendations and plans can be based. The ambiguity of educational goals or the vagueness with which they are articulated may be regarded as responsible for some of the difficulties in planning. Given more clearly identified objectives or better defined goals in education, both planning and coordination would not pose so many of the problems so often encountered in matters of public persuasion or public policy-making.[6] While it is true that much of the development

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6. For an excellent example of meaningful goals and purposes set by a distinguished committee of public leaders see: Within Our Reach: Report of the Commission on Goals for Higher Education in the South, Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1961.

of higher education is due more to improvisation than purposive action, it is nonetheless true that society and state, as well as the nation, are committed to definite educational objectives and that the development of higher education has been, for the most part, in keeping with these commitments.

Another major difficulty in planning would seem to be the failure to distinguish the types and levels of planning needed in higher education. The type of planning needed for a state system of public education must be done at a different level from the planning needed for the development of a single institution. By the same token, the planning needed for the development of a single academic program is at a different level from the planning required for institutional development. Financial and budgetary planning call for data which are different from the data needed in planning for faculty recruitment and development, student personnel programs, academic and research programs, library holdings and collections, and physical facilities. While budgetary planning is a necessary part of adequate planning in all areas of higher education, budgetary planning is meaningful only after certain decisions, choices, and commitments have been made. The gist, then, is that the different types and levels of planning in higher education call for different types of data and frequently require different methodological approaches. Each form of planning, however, must be carried out within a context of meaningful goals and purposes. The consideration of these goals, objectives, and purposes is an essential facet of the planning process regardless of the level or type of planning. Educational administrators, public officials, and boards of control who are unable to articulate what they are planning <u>for</u> are handicapped in their efforts to plan <u>to</u>. Public leaders who are unable or unwilling to examine educational values and purposes are unlikely to contribute greatly to either commission reports or the future development of higher education.

Not the least of issues in planning for higher education is lack of understanding of change as a process. Change in contemporary society is inevitable, but change is not synonymous with progress. If educational change in the past has been somewhat spasmodic, educational change in the future must be more systematic. This implies that those concerned with planning must seek a better understanding of the processes of invention, innovation, dissemination, adoption, and adaptation. Whereas American industry and business reportedly view

research and development as the foundation of economic growth and increasingly look to the nation's colleges and universities for research methods and findings, higher education itself has not shown the same willingness to investigate its own effectiveness or to seek better methods of accomplishing its own goals. Innovation is a word that flows freely from the lips and pens of those who discuss the issues of higher education, but the slowness with which institutions of higher learning adopt or adapt new methods of disseminating knowledge is a fact of which numerous critics have taken note. Better research on educational change is sorely needed, and a better adaptation in general of research findings in the behavioral sciences would seem to be imperative.

Criteria for Setting Priorities

The crucial need in planning for higher education is useful criteria by which to set priorities for educational objectives. The establishment of priorities implies that educational decision-making is a choice of alternative actions and programs which can be compared in some way with each other. There is the further implication that educational objectives and alternative actions can be ranked in order of their importance to state or society. Although the criteria for setting priorities in higher education have seldom been explicit in commission reports or state master plans, it would appear that priorities are established on the basis of several criteria which have inherent weaknesses.

A close reading of the recommendations made by state commissions or study groups would suggest that they have viewed educational offerings at the level of higher education in terms of population variables and applied a democratic "yardstick." In other words, they have assumed that educational opportunities must be proportional to the number of people; where large numbers of people exist, educational opportunities at the post-secondary level must be expanded. If the state contains a certain proportion of the nation's population, there is frequently the unstated inference that the state should contain the same proportion of post-secondary institutions. If a certain proportion of the nation's college-age population is enrolled in higher education, then a similar proportion of the state's college-age population should be enrolled in some form of higher education. The State of

Georgia, for example, in 1960 had 2.2 percent of the nation's population and 2.2 percent of the nation's post-secondary institutions but 2.5 percent of the nation's college-age population and only 1.3 percent of the nation's college students. In brief, many state commissions have applied what we might call "a criterion of proportionality."

Far less noticeable as a criterion for setting priorities but much more pervasive is a procedure in which the educational accomplishments of other states and regions are viewed, valued, and then imitated. The application of this criterion is a reflection of the strong conforming forces in American higher education. That each institution of higher education in America, despite the great diversity of institutions, accepts a fairly common model of what an institution of higher education should be is evident from even the briefest perusal of college catalogues and promotional literature. Each institution stresses its unique features and opportunities but the vast majority give lip service to what would seem to be a common core of educational values and goals.[7] How many faculty members, college administrators, state legislators, and even governors have visited other states, viewed some program of notable success, and hurried home "to spread the gospel" is an open question. How many faculty members design and propose a new academic program only after writing similar or more prestigious institutions for a description of their program is also an unanswered question. In any event, there is little doubt that much state planning invokes "a criterion of comparability."

Although a considerable amount of lip service is given to the need for institutions to play complementary rather than competitive roles in higher education, "a criterion of complementarity" would seem to be less evident in educational planning than is generally regarded. Such a criterion implies that the goals of state and society are common to a group who divide the labor of education to accomplish as many goals as possible. This criterion has produced a great deal of cooperative rhetoric in higher education, but it has failed to produce the cooperative action among institutions

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7. For a discussion of converging patterns in higher education see: T. R. McConnell, A General Pattern for American Public Higher Education. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962.

of higher learning that one would logically expect. Only in regional compacts, such as several of those entered into by the Southern Regional Education Board, and in academic programs of exceptional expense, such as medicine and engineering, has any degree of success been achieved in complementary programs. Occasionally two or more colleges will pool certain resources, such as library holdings, expensive scientific equipment, and faculty members, but this type of cooperation is not pervasive in public higher education. This is not to be critical of the failure of colleges and universities to cooperate more fully; it does suggest, nonetheless, that educational leaders may be better at devising educational rhetoric than educational programs which do, in fact, accomplish the many purposes for which they are intended.

A fourth criterion for assigning priorities in education must be mentioned because it is, in reality, the most potent. The idealism that surrounds higher education in America does not actually permit this criterion to be applied openly in the setting of priorities, but it is beyond a doubt a highly pragmatic criterion that is frequently employed; it is what we might call "a criterion of finite dollars and pressure politics." Implicit in the notion is a relationship between the cost of educational institutions and programs and the pressure that is brought to bear upon those who must make the final decision to authorize the building of an institution or the development of an academic program. Viewed realistically, the criterion implies that if funds are available, that institution or program will be authorized for which there is the most public pressure. Where sufficient pressure exists and there are insufficient funds, an effort will be made to raise the funds needed for the institution or academic program. Lest this view appear too cynical, it is well to point out that failure to concede the realities of education and public policy is a cogent reason why commission reports are so often catalogued and filed--and so seldom read and implemented.[8]

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8. For an interesting discussion of the relationship between state government and higher education see: Malcolm Moos and Francis E. Rourke, The Campus and the State. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959.

The Improvement of Planning

The increasing importance of planning in higher education and the weakness of planning methodology require that greater attention be given to the improvement of planning. There is an urgent need for public officials, college administrators, faculty members, and boards of control to understand the process of planning. As each state seeks, in its own way, to anticipate the future demands which will be placed upon its institutions of higher education and move to expand the educational opportunities available to its citizens, this need will be intensified. Although guidelines for state-wide planning are extremely difficult to establish at the present time, the following generalizations or principles may serve as a provisional effort to gain a better understanding of planning:

1. Planning in higher education increasingly calls for specialized professional skills. The collection of data needed, the identification of objectives and purposes, and the evaluation of gathered data require skills of analysis that are seldom present in state commissions composed of public leaders. It is well to recognize, however, that higher education is unlikely to benefit from the establishment of "a planning elite." The goals and objectives of higher education must be determined in "an open marketplace of ideas" and not be dictated by a clique of specialists. On the other hand, planning specialists must be professional in the sense of holding to a larger view of society and state and must not permit themselves to be cast in the role of technicians who gather data but never interpret their significance.

2. Although frequently linked with "coordination," planning should be clearly differentiated from the administrative responsibilities required for the state-wide coordination of institutions and programs. Administrators should be involved in planning, but planning specialists should not be involved in administration. This is to say that planning should be a process of identifying desirable goals and suggesting acceptable means of attainment; administration is the execution of policies which may or may not be derived from planning surveys.

3. Projected population trends reflect the increasing demand for higher education and document the need for planning, but they do not provide all the materials for planning. Projected trends merely reflect the expected continuation of events observed in the past. As such, they provide valuable insight into the social, economic, and cultural forces which influence the development of higher education. In many cases, however, such as the projected concentration of population in urban areas, educational planning, instead of swimming with the tide, should actually consider the possibilities of reversing or decelerating the projected trends. It is essential that educational opportunities be expanded for people where the people are located, but the relationship between educational opportunities and population mobility is more complex than most commission reports suggest. Projections of social and economic trends are contingent upon the availability of educated manpower, just as educational opportunities must be contingent upon social and economic trends.

4. Planning should be conducted within a formal framework or structure for doing so. The size of the planning unit or agency must necessarily depend upon the magnitude of the state's system of higher education, but the functions of the planning unit should be clearly delineated and an adequate staff should be provided. The role of the planning specialist should be defined in terms which are not ambiguous. He should know and understand commitments that have already been made; a serious question of ethics is raised for both public administrators and planning specialists when planning surveys are requested to justify previous commitments or to delay administrative action.

5. A clearer distinction between special or <u>ad hoc</u> planning and systematic, long-range, continuing planning would seem to be most desirable. While it will always be well for state commissions of public leaders to take periodic stock of their system of higher education, such commissions cannot remain in continuous session. There is a need, however, for continuous and systematic data collection and for

frequent evaluation and interpretation of such data. This should be a staff function of a centralized planning unit or agency. In other words, each state should have a centralized planning unit to keep its fingers on the pulse of higher education. Periodic reports should discuss the progress being made and provide assistance for continued development. At the first sign of "sickness" or at any time when new directions, goals, and purposes are clearly needed, the state commission of public leaders should be convened.

6. A clear distinction is also desirable between planning for a state system of higher education and planning for institutional growth. A centralized planning unit can be of great assistance to individual institutions in setting institutional goals and in making realistic plans for continued growth. Responsibility for institutional planning should remain, however, in the hands of administrators and faculty members at a particular institution. This should be done with full recognition that elaborate parts do not necessarily function as a unified whole. A perspective on the state's total post-secondary educational resources should hold numerous advantages for administrators at individual institutions. Conversely, planning specialists should recognize the futility of trying to impose a grand design on any state system of higher education. Planning in higher education must begin with what exists. The historical identity and traditions of existing institutions must be considered in state planning; no state has the privilege of "starting from scratch."

7. Finally, planning must be, in essence, a form of leadership. John Millett has written that planners must strive for influence and not for power.[9] This suggests that those involved in planning can lead best by identifying, defining, and articulating meaningful goals and directions for higher education.

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9. John D. Millett, "State Planning for Higher Education." The Educational Record (Summer, 1965), 223-230.

Their leadership must be ideational and not authoritarian. There is the further implication that their efforts to lead will always be challenged and that a crucial part of planning is learning to drive a diplomatic bargain in the marketplace of ideas.

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